NUMB. XLVIII.

THE PLAIN DEALER.

——*Quod nequeo monſtr are & ſentio tantum.* JUV.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4. 1724.

DETRACTORS may be ſaid to lead their Lives in a Habit of moſt injurious Falſhood towards good Men, and of the moſt offenſive Impiety to Heaven. Perſons, of this [illegible] and abandoned Appetite [illegible] the numerous Miſchiefs they do to human ciety, be compared to the moſt dangerous ravenous Beaſts of Prey; with this Difference, at, as Beaſts of Prey do good ſometimes, in rrying one another, theſe, on the contrary, ll not fall upon, or devour any thing but what excellent.

Wit, Wiſdom, Beauty, good Humour, Moſty, Valour, Integrity, in fine, all the Virtues d all the Graces, which can illuſtrate any Perof either Sex, are as ſo many tempting *Spoils* the ſavage Slanderer, and ſtrong Provocatives Detraction. There is ſcarce a Man living, at has many little, infamous Stories, more than rdinary, privately handed about with great Inſtry, from one to another, in order to deeciate his Character in the World, but what ill be ſurely found, upon a cloſe Examination, have merited publick Applauſe for ſome noble ction or other: Examine ſtill farther, and it ill as certainly be found, that *that* noble Action as the very Source of a *ſecret* Envy and a *priate* Hatred, which broke out in a Hundred *hiſper'd Traditions*, till it ſpread and inlarged ſelf into *publick Defamation.*

The moſt unhappy Circumſtances which attend the illuſtrious Sufferers in this Way, I eckon to be theſe; That, as thoſe Perſons, who eek after Fame the moſt eagerly, do, for the moſt part, very plentifully deſerve it; ſo they are the moſt frequently interrupted in the Search, and the leaſt able to bear the Trouble of ſuch unwelcome Interruptions. Men are more *Idaſ* [illegible] of Glory, than ſuch as moſt *judiciouſly* deſerve it; this is a pleaſant Weakneſs: But then no Men have a quicker Senſibility of injuſt Reproaches than thoſe who take Care never to deſerve them; and this is a ſore Frailty, which opens, through the Boſoms of the Generous and the Innocent, a Way to a Thouſand unneceſſary *Heart-Achs*. It is really a Pity, that it ſhould be ſo much in the Power of Calumny, as Experience ſhews it is, to ſtrike a Damp upon the moſt Generous Spirits, and throw a cumbrous Load over an aſpiring Mind, that is upon the Stretch after Glory and Honour. But what ſeems at preſent the moſt of all to be regretted, is, That, by the frequent Complaints I have lately received, this Vice is as prevailing, as it is inſupportable.

I have received a Letter from a Gentleman, containing a very lively Deſcription of a lovely Lady, whoſe Charms have been ſo long drowned in Tears, that they are almoſt worn out and carried away by the waſting Tide of her Sorrows, which ſhe hides, but cannot ſtop: — He proceeds to tell me, "That, upon Inquiry into "the Source of this mighty Woe, he finds it "aroſe from Two or Three ambiguous and "broken Sentences, glancing at her Virtue and "Converſation, artfully dropp'd by a malicious "Woman in the Ear of a Youth of a Jealous "Diſpoſition, who loved her, whom *ſhe* loved, "who was contracted to her, and departed from "her on this Account. —— What ſignifies "talking

" talking to her of her Innocence, and telling " her, that no Mortal living credits it but that " *one* Jealous young Man? —— Alas! it is " only *his* not believing it, it is only *his* return- " ing to his Faith in her; nay, it is only *his* ab- " juring all Thoughts of ſuch a Thing, that muſt " pour Comfort upon her Affliction.—— 'Till " then, ſhe muſt remain as *Inconſolable*, as ſhe is " *Innocent*.——

My Correſpondent goes on to ſay, " That " he had the Curioſity to go and ſee this " Monſter of Deformity, this Detractreſs. He " found her, as he tells me, Old, Wrinkled, " Ugly; her V ſage of a pale, juſt turning black, " as with a Mortification; her Conſcience he " takes to be much of a Complexion with " her Face; for, when he charged her with " it, ſhe own'd it as ſome *trifling Miſtake*; " then, drawing her Mouth into a ſcornful " Smile, to contradict her Words, cries out, " That *ſhe did not mean it as it was taken.* " —When the *fatal* Conſequences were preſs'd " upon her, — ſhe ſaid, *She was ſorry*, but ex- " preſs'd her Grief ſo very *unconcernedly*, de- " ſiring *to be troubled no more about it*, ſince *it* " *was not Actionable*, that ſhe might have ſate " for the Picture of *Envy*'s Look, when ſhe " has juſt ſtollen from doing one of her moſt " *precious* Miſchiefs." ——

This Correſpondent of mine, juſtly mov'd with his own relation, [illegible] his Letter with warm Expoſtulations. —— " *ſin* thus! and ſhall INNOCENCE look " *pale* for it! Is there no Redreſs? —— Yes, " there is—— Others, who are out of the Queſti- " on, may, and ought to riſe up in the Defence " of Innocence.—— Let the PLAIN DEALER, " ſays he, whenever any Scandal is traced to " the Fountain-head, but mark the Quarters of " the Detractors, as Croſſes in the Time of " the Peſtilence are placed upon the Doors of " the Deceaſed, and that Method will effectu- " ally ſtrike the Tongue of Detraction dumb.

Another Account has been lately tranſmitted to me, concerning a young Gentleman, who is ſaid to have numerous good Qualities, and has been divided from the Eſtimation of his Friend, by the as conſtant as falſe Inſinuations of a worſe than once perjured Woman, who inſiſts, That the young Gentleman betrayed his Friend's Liberty for a Bribe.—— The contrary has been made out, and atteſted to her Face— She continues, behind his Back, to load him with the Calumny.—— Finding, ſince ſhe began her Evil Reports, that they would not take with- out putting on an Air of Charity and Sanctity, ſhe now concludes her Story to Strangers thus.— " He (meaning the Perſon ſhe aims to ſcan- " dalize) is generally allowed to be a good " Man, an honeſt Man—— Pretty genera " indeed.—— But what is there to be ſ " for Accidents in this World?—— Th " is nothing wonderful—— Nothing new un " the Sun.—— I have ſo often Occaſion " Wonder, that I am reſolved never to " any Thing, for the Future, ſurprize me i " a Fit of Admiration.—— He is no Lo " of Money— that is certain, as ſome ſay " But, ſay they what they will, there is ſuc " Prevalence in Bribes, no one knows his o " Strength till he be tried.—— There is " truſting any Body.—— I would not h " believed it of him, if *Every-Body had not ſ* " *it*; but, as the Proverb ſpeaks, *What Eve* " *Body ſays muſt be true.*" ——

Here, this my Correſpondent ſays, he ask the Detractreſs, *How Every-Body came to know* and ſhe immediately boaſted, That ſhe was Diſcoverer of it, to all thoſe, who heard it *firſt Hand.* " To what, continues he, may " properly liken ſuch a dangerous Creature " this is, who puts out falſe Colours of Virt " that ſhe may come up ſafe, and rob real V " tue, unſuſpected? She can be compared to " thing that reſembles her ſo nearly as a *Wi* " in one of thoſe fatal Operations, where M " der is the Conſequence of her Incantatio " The Detractreſs molds her Deſcriptions, " the *Witch* does her Waxen Images. W " the *Witch* has made an End of her Image, " bewitch'd Body periſhes; and where the " [illegible] Deſcriptions, " makes an injur'd Reputation die!

I have ſeveral other Accounts of the Sort, to all which I ſhall give an Anſwer, a future Paper, when I ſhall explain my ſelf large upon this Head.

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